

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O P 051150Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5633

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 6453

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, UR, AF, IN

SUBJECT: BHUTTO TRIP TO MOSCOW POSTPONED

1. YESTERDAY AT THE FOURTH OF JULY CEREMONY BHUTTO ASKED IF AZIZ AHMED HAD SEEN ME EARLIER IN THE DAY. I REPLIED THAT OUR APPOINTMENT WAS FOR THIS MORNING. BHUTTO SAID "HE WILL TELL YOU THAT MY MOSCOW TRIP IS OFF UNTIL OCTOBER, AND GIVE YOU THE DETAILS."

2. AZIZ AHMED TOLD ME TODAY THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY TO CANCEL HIS OWN TRIP TO MOSCOW AND TO DELIVER THE WORD THAT MOSCOW SUGGESTED A DELAY IN THE BHUTTO VISIT. THE AMBASSADOR HAD EXPLAINED THAT THE SCHEDULED DATE OF JULY 8 WOULD NOT BE IDEAL AND SUGGESTED THAT SOMETIME IN THE SECOND TEN-DAY PERIOD OF OCTOBER WOULD BE PREFERABLE FROM THE SOVIET POINT OF VIEW. SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD SAID THAT THEY WANTED THE BEST POSSIBLE CONDITIONS FOR A BHUTTO VISIT AND SINCE PODGORNYY WAS SCHEDULED FOR A TRIP TO SOMALIA ON JULY 8 - 12, AND BREZHNEV WOULD BE OUT OF MOSCOW THE REMAINDER OF JULY AND AUGUST, SCHEDULE BEGINNING JULY 8 SEEMED INADVISABLE.

3. AS VISIT HAD ALREADY BEEN PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED HERE,

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BHUTTO HAD RELAYED WORD TO SOVIET AMBASSADOR THAT SOME

PLAUSIBLE PUBLIC REASON SHOULD BE GIVEN FOR POSTPONEMENT. BHUTTO HAD SUGGESTED THAT HE ANNOUNCED POSTPONEMENT DUE TO URGENT MATTERS IN HIS OWN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WHICH REQUIRED HIS PRESENCE IN PAKISTAN. SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAS FORWARDED THIS SUGGESTION TO MOSCOW FOR APPROVAL, BUT AZIZ AHMED TOLD ME HE DOUBTED THAT RUSSIAN APPROVAL WOULD BE FORTHCOMING.

4. I ASKED AZIZ WHAT HE MADE OF ALL OF THIS, AND HE ADMITTED THAT HE WAS FAR FROM SURE. HE SAID THEY FELT THE REASONS GIVEN BY THE RUSSIANS FOR POSTPONEMENT WERE PROBABLY NOT BONA FIDE, PARTICULARLY AS BREZTBEV SAW STATE VISITORS OUTSIDE OF MOSCOW. HE SPECULATED THAT SOMETHING MIGHT BE COOKING ON THE AFGHAN FRONT AS THE ACTIVITY OF AGENTS IN THE FRONTIER AREA IN BALUCHISTAN SEEMED TO BE ON THE INCREASE. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WAS NO REAL TROUBLE IN THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER TRIBAL BELT, WHICH THE AFGHANS HAD BEEN HOPING TO EXPLOIT AFTER PAK FORWARD MOVES SOMETIME AGO. HE SAID THE PEOPLE HAVE NOT ONLY ACCEPTED NEW ROADS INTO THE AREA, BUT WERE ASKING FOR SCHOOLS AND OTHER FACILITIES. EXPLOSIONS AND OTHER TROUBLES IN THE PESHAWAR AREA MADE THEM WONDER IF AFGHANISTAN WAS NOT TRYING TO LEAP-FROG THE TRIBAL BELT. I TOLD HIM THAT UNLESS THERE WAS SOMETHING BIG IN THE WIND, WHICH I SINCERELY DOUBTED, I WOULD QUESTION WHETHER ANYTHING OF THIS NATURE LAY BEHIND THE SOVIET DECISION TO POSTPONE THE USIT.

5. WE SPECULATED TOGETHER AS TO WHAT MIGHT BE BEHIND ALL THIS WITHOUT MAKING MUCH PROGRESS. BHUTTO HAD MADE A REMARK ABOUT DAUD BEING IN MOSCOW WHEN THE INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION WENT OFF, WHICH THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR HAD PROTESTED, BUT WE DOUBTED THAT THIS WAS A CAUSE. PAKISTAN'S DECISION TO POSTPONE THE SIMLA PROCESS FOR A TIME AFTER THE INDIAN EXPLOSION WAS ALSO MENTIONED, BUT THIS AS WELL DID IT SEEM TOO PLAUSIBLE. IF OUR DELEGATION RECENTLY IN MOSCOW PICKED UP ANY INFO THAT COULD SHED ANY LIGHT, IF WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED.

6. (THE AFTERNOON OUR CONSUL IN LAHORE PHONED
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THE EMBASSY TO SAY HE HAD HEARD FROM POLITICAL SOURCES IN THAT CITY THAT BHUTTO'S MOSCOW VISIT HAD BEEN CANCELLED, SO THE STORY IS ALREADY GETTING OUT.)BYROADE

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NNN

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